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ABSTRACT

This module is part of a training program for foster parents and foster care workers offered at Colorado State University. The module examines religious practices in foster homes. The module's learning objectives address: (1) the religious background of a foster child's birth family; (2) the rights of a foster child's birth parents concerning the child's religious upbringing; (3) expectations about foster parents' handling of religious matters related to a foster child; (4) foster parents' awareness about differences in religious beliefs; (5) communication between foster parents and foster care workers about religious practices; and (6) cooperation between foster and birth parents concerning the foster child's religious upbringing. The module consists of three lectures which include reading materials, charts, and activities for individuals or groups. Lecture 1 provides an overview of the role of religion in foster homes and the religious upbringing of foster children. Lecture 2 discusses individuals' development of awareness of their religious beliefs, and presents case studies that illustrate religious issues that might arise in foster care placement. Lecture 3 describes a contract between a foster family and a foster placement agency in which the family stipulates its religious practices, and ways the family will handle situations or problems involving a foster child's religious beliefs or practices. A form for evaluating the module is appended. (BC)

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FOSTERING FAMILIES

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Designed in Consultation with the Colorado Department of Social Services
Under Grant Number UAA7T7C0000001

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FOSTERING FAMILIES

A Specialized Training Program
Designed for
Foster Care Workers & Foster Care Parents

RELIGION AND THE FOSTER HOME

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January, 1992

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FOSTERING FAMILIES

is designed to improve the competencies of caseworkers and foster care parents in the areas of foster care placement, case management and supervision, case planning, and provide an understanding of the multiple-systems interfacing with families and out-of-home children.

is a unique opportunity for foster care parents and foster care workers to explore the many complex aspects of the foster care delivery system.

is a training program designed to be comprehensive in its approach to educating those people most important to the success of foster care.

is specially designed in 3 1/2 and 4 hour sessions to meet the varying learning and educational needs of foster care providers.

is designed to foster "a partnership of skill" to effect quality care for families and children in distress.

is offered for upper-division college classwork in the Social Work Department and Division of Continuing Education at Colorado State University.

is a collaborative project with the Colorado Department of Social Services and supported with funds from Title IV-E and Colorado State University.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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FOSTERING FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

Fostering Families is a specialized foster care training program. Various important learning concepts related to families, youth and children are explored *within* the context of child welfare and protective services. By paying specific attention to the foster care environment, Fostering Families' training is highly relevant for caseworkers and foster parents. Fostering Families is also unique because faculty and training staff receive regular input from foster parents and social services people who work daily to meet the needs of children in out-of-home placement. Thus, this training project continues to evolve because of the on-going training program.

Our goal is to create small group training experiences which offer new knowledge, concepts, ideas, and skills to improve (1) the foster care assessment and placement process, (2) the case planning, monitoring and supervising process, and, (3) the recruitment and retention of foster homes.

Foster parents and caseworkers are learning collaboratively in each session. Each module is designed to motivate participants to go beyond simple transmission of information to training opportunities created so that trainees can apply concepts either in role play situations, small group experiences, or through individual activities. Participants are also provided the opportunity in the training session to integrate their learning through discussion and group experiences. To achieve high accessibility for foster parents, training sessions are often held in the evenings and on weekends. To afford access to caseworkers, sessions are also scheduled on weekdays. Each week training sessions are held throughout the urban, suburban and rural areas of the State.

In this module, Religion & the Foster Home, training participants will discuss why religious practices are important to address, and how foster homes can gain more clarity with their agency around their religious practices. In this module, foster parents are provided an opportunity to develop a contract between the foster home and the placement agency. A central point in this module is to recognize the birth parent's right to select the religious beliefs and activities of the child(ren). Increasing the awareness of caseworkers and foster parents will improve the placement process.

Several case situations explore the placement process when religious practices are considered. The Learning Objectives on page 2 further discuss the intent of the training.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

Each manual is written to provide a wide range of information on the topic area being addressed. In the training session it is unlikely that everything in the manual will be equally addressed. We recommend reading the manual completely soon after a training session. We have been told that this helps greatly in gaining a full understanding of the issue at hand.

Colorado State University allows participants the opportunity to gain university credit when a series of training sessions are satisfactorily completed. During the session, the training instructor will review procedures for applying for credit.

We welcome you to this Fostering Families training session. We encourage you to participate fully in the training; ask questions that help you (and others) in this interesting and challenging learning opportunity.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

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FOSTERING FAMILIES

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

* religion	organized practices and behaviors that express one's beliefs and faith, the external practices of one's faith
* spirituality	the quality of the heart, the internal experience of one's faith

* These definitions are for this module only.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To improve the child placement process for foster children, and thereafter, to achieve more effective case monitoring, this training experience will seek to achieve at least some of the following objectives, if not all of these:

1. **To understand how the religious background brought to foster care by the foster child is a part of the child's identity and an important emotional connection to his/her birth family, personal history and culture.**

2. **To understand that the child's legal parent or guardian (usually a birth parent) has a legal right to select the religious beliefs and activities to which his/her child will be exposed which includes the right to limit or restrict a minor child's exposure to certain beliefs and practices.**

3. **To understand the social services department's expectations of foster parents concerning how they handle matters related to the foster child and the child's parent's religion and spirituality.**

4. **To increase the foster parent's self awareness concerning what differences in religious beliefs and spirituality they can and cannot tolerate.**

5. **To understand the importance of clear and honest communication between the foster parent and the foster care worker concerning what forms of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices by the foster child and his parent will and will not be acceptable by the foster parents.**

6. **To identify ways in which the foster parent can work with the birth parent in relation to a foster child's religious beliefs.**

FOSTERING FAMILIES

RELIGION AND FOSTER PARENTING

Lecturette #1

There are a number of reasons why it is important to discuss religion as it relates to the child placement process and to foster parenting. Some of these reasons are specifically listed below.

1. **Religious beliefs and values are often an important motive for becoming a foster parent.**

2. **Religious beliefs and practices are, for many people, an important source of strength when trying to cope with frustration (being a foster parent provides many opportunities for becoming frustrated).**

3. **Many conflicts between the agency and foster parents regarding issues of discipline, involvement of birth parent, etc., seem related to differences in beliefs and values. It appears as if many of those beliefs and values are tied to, or grow out of religious belief and spirituality.**

<u>Individual or Group Activity</u>:

1. Review the objectives on the preceding page. Consider the importance of these objectives for foster parents and case workers. Are these objectives clear regarding the intent of this training program?

2. In addition to the objectives listed, have the trainees list any other learning areas they hope to address in this training.

3. Review the glossary before moving to the first exercise.

In preparation for this session, we have asked both foster parents and case workers to identify concerns and issues. In Chart A "Religion: Concerns to Foster Parents and Workers" some of the information we have gained is listed.

We do not have information around the areas of concern which are expressed by foster children or birth parents directly. Yet, we recognize that there are many points of view. In fact, we are not aware of other materials addressing religion in foster care or other out-of-home placement situations. We do know that when a religious institution runs a special home or placement facility for out-of-home children that specific religious practices may be practiced. Yet, for foster homes there are some specific rules and regulations that must be adhered to, and after that, little if anything is said about religion or religious practices in the home unless there are specific parental requests or objections by the child(ren).

As we move through the training program today, there are three key issues which begin our discussion. Each of these issues is highlighted in a grey box, and then, addressed below.

<u>Individual or Group Activity</u>:

Review Chart A. Consider the following questions:
1) What areas of concern might be voiced by foster children?

2) What areas of concern might be voiced by birth parents?

3) What feelings might foster parents express about instances where birth parents have dictated religious involvements?

Foster children may bring a variety of religious beliefs, or no religious beliefs, to the out-of-home placement.

First, we live in a country containing people from a great many cultures and religions. For example, we are Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindu and so on. Within each of those major groupings there are many subgroupings. Within Christianity, for example, there are numerous traditions, disciplines and denominations. There are also people who profess no specific religious beliefs, or who reject the idea of religion altogether (about 10%).

Still others may adhere to a set of principles rooted in somewhat unconventional forms of spirituality such as new age spirituality, astrology and numerology. The point being made is that the child coming into foster care can bring a variety of religious beliefs and experiences or none at all.

The foster care system as a whole and its foster parents and case workers must be able to accept and accommodate this great diversity. How do we do this? What can workers and foster parents do to improve how we accommodate this process?

We should distinguish between religion and spirituality.

Second, when we discuss a topic like the relationship of religion and foster care, it may be helpful to make a distinction between externals and internals, between external religious behavior and internal spirituality.

It may be useful to think of the term "religion" as referring to the external practices or the behavioral expression of one's internal beliefs or faith. This would include such behaviors as church attendance, public prayer and participation in ceremony.

On the other hand, the term "spirituality" or faith refers to a quality of the heart. It is internal, it is not visible.

Usually there is a connection between religion and spirituality. But not always. An individual may have faith and a spiritual life without giving much attention to external religious practices. On the other hand, an individual may participate in the externals without having much in the way of an internal faith or spirituality.

This is an important distinction to keep in mind. When we speak, we must make sure others know whether we are referring to internal spirituality or to external religious practice.

The birth parent has the right to choose the religious beliefs and practices of his/her child even in placement.

Third, we assume many of you have biological children in addition to having foster children. As a parent we have a number of legal rights and responsibilities.

One fundamental parental right is that of deciding what religious beliefs and practices--if any--will be taught to our child.

The birth parent of a child in foster care has that same legal right. Only the termination of parental rights by a judge can change that reality.

So whenever we discuss the topic of religion and foster care, we must remember that it is the birth parent--not the foster parent, not the social worker and not the agency--that has the right to choose the religious beliefs and practices of his/her child.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

RELIGION: CONCERNS TO FOSTER PARENTS AND WORKERS

Chart A

AREAS OF CONCERN VOICED BY FOSTER PARENTS

- When child has religious beliefs significantly different from those of foster parents.
- When child will not participate in (or ridicules) the beliefs and religious practices that are of great importance to foster parents (e.g., church attendance, prayer, etc.).
- When foster child has frightening or bizarre beliefs (e.g., "devil worship").
- When foster child undermines beliefs of other children in home (e.g., foster parents own children).
- When birth parent objects to or ridicules the religious beliefs or practices of foster parents.

AREAS OF CONCERN VOICED BY FOSTER CARE WORKERS

- When foster parents do not respect or honor religious beliefs held by foster child or child's birth parent.
- When foster parent's beliefs give rise to unacceptable or inappropriate handling of foster child (e.g., inappropriate, religious indoctrination, discipline).

FOSTERING FAMILIES

DEVELOPING OUR OWN SELF-AWARENESS

Lecturette #2

Preventing problems from happening is better than trying to resolve events that have become emotional and out-of-control. This applies to conflicts and misunderstandings that can arise in foster care as a result of differences in religious beliefs, practices, and spirituality.

We have identified four steps that may contribute in preventing conflicts and misunderstandings. These are discussed briefly below.

(1) Develop greater self awareness concerning how your religious beliefs, values and practices may affect your performance in the role of foster parent.

(2) Identify and clarify your own limits, requirements and expectations concerning what issues you can and cannot, will and will not, handle as a foster parent.

(3) Clearly and completely communicate your concerns, limits and requirements to the agency so agency personnel will have this information prior to making a decision as to which child is placed in your home.

Individual or Group Activity:

Take several minutes to complete Exercise #1 "Developing Self-Awareness."

Individual or Group Activity:

Do Exercises #2 & #3 where issues of placement in foster care are explored.

(4) **In cases where you accept the placement of a child but anticipate that there may be some problem or conflict related to differences in religion and spirituality, insist on the development of a written contract between you, the birth parent, the child (if old enough) and the foster care worker concerning how these issues or potential problems are to be handled.**

FOSTERING FAMILIES

DEVELOPING SELF AWARENESS

Exercise #1

In this exercise you are asked to answer a number of questions about your beliefs and behavior related to religion and spirituality. You will not be asked to share these with anyone else. This is a purely private exercise. Work hard at answering the questions with complete honesty.

Question #1: **If someone asked you the question: "What are your key religious beliefs," what would be your answer? (one or two sentences)**

Question #2: **In one or two sentences explain whether or not your religious beliefs and spirituality are part of your motivation for wanting to become a foster parent.**

Question #3: **In one or two sentences, describe how your personal beliefs concerning religion and spirituality may enhance (benefit) your ability to be a foster parent.**

Question #4: **In one or two sentences, describe how your personal beliefs concerning religion and spirituality may limit or hamper your ability to be a foster parent.**

Question #5: **You have been asked three questions about your views toward religion and spirituality. In one or two sentences describe how you feel about being asked these questions?**

FOSTERING FAMILIES

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS

Exercise #2

INSTRUCTIONS

Depending upon the time available and the training interests of the group, one or more of these cases can be used in the training.

The training participants should be asked to take several minutes to read the case(s) which will be discussed. For about 20 minutes groups should be formed to discuss thoughts and reactions to the case situation. The purpose of this exercise is to increase the self awareness of caseworkers and foster parents.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

CASE SITUATIONS

JIMMY: In Need of Placement

Jimmy (age 10) is in need of foster care for at least four months while his mother undergoes major surgery for a cancerous tumor. She requires lengthy recuperation. The placement could extend to six months or longer if the mother does not respond to treatment. No relatives are available to care for Jimmy.

The placement must take place tomorrow. Jimmy has some special needs insofar as he is mildly mentally retarded. He needs a special diet and must take medication on a daily basis.

Jimmy's mother wants him placed with a family whose religious beliefs and practices are like her own.

Only two foster homes are available. The Smith home and the Jones home. The Smith's have religious beliefs similar to Jimmy and his mother. However, the agency has had a somewhat negative experience with this foster home and has some doubts about its ability to address Jimmy's special needs.

On the other hand, the Jones' home has been effective in caring for children like Jimmy who have special needs. However, the Jones have no particular religious beliefs. In fact, they have not really promoted religious practices in foster children who have been in their home before, and, further, have downplayed the importance of religion in child care.

<u>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:</u>

1) **Into which foster home should Jimmy be placed? Why?**

2) **What steps should the worker take in planning for the best placement home?**

FOSTERING FAMILIES

CASE SITUATIONS

MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, a couple in their mid 30's, have completed an application to become licensed foster parents. They have two children of their own. Because they have a stable family life and some skills in working with troubled kids (e.g., both have many years of employment in children's group homes), they decided they would like to be foster parents to children between the ages of about 6-14.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were raised in very strict religious homes. Both resent this aspect of their own childhood and are now of the opinion that children should be completely free to choose their own religious beliefs or reject all such beliefs. They do not believe parents should impose religious beliefs on children.

As foster parents they would not and could not participate in any foster care plan for a child that involved supporting the foster child's participation in religious activities.

<u>DISCUSSION QUESTION:</u>

1) Should the Johnson's be utilized as foster parents? Why? Why not?

FOSTERING FAMILIES

CASE SITUATIONS

MR. AND MRS. JENNINGS

Mr. and Mrs. Jennings, a couple in their mid-30's, have completed an application to become licensed foster parents. They have two children of their own. Because they have a stable family life and some skills in working with troubled kids (e.g., both have many years of employment in children's group homes) they decided they would like to be foster parents to children between the ages of about 6-14.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Jennings are deeply religious, born again Christians. Their belief in Jesus and their participation in a church has had a profoundly positive effect on their life. They are eager to share their faith with others. One of their motives for becoming foster parents is the opportunity it presents to convert children to Christianity.

As foster parents they would insist on teaching their foster child about Jesus. Because they know their own beliefs represent the one, true faith, they feel it is both justified and necessary to help the foster child become a Christian, regardless of what the child's birth parents or agency may want.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Should the Jennings be utilized as foster parents? Why? Why not?

FOSTERING FAMILIES

CASE SITUATIONS

MARY: A FOSTER CHILD

Because of confirmed reports of severe and long-term sexual abuse, 14-year-old Mary is being separated from her mother and mother's live-in boyfriend, and placed into foster care. The abuse was committed by the boyfriend. Mary's mother failed to protect Mary and refuses to sever her relationship with her boyfriend.

Mary dresses in a sexually provocative manner, talks a lot about boys and her sexual experiences with men and boys. She smokes and is openly critical of people who believe in the Bible and go to church (note: as a young child Mary was sexually abused by a bible school teacher).

Mr. and Mrs. Green, foster parents, are eager to work with adolescent girls. They do insist, however, that any foster child placed in their home must attend church on a weekly basis and participate in daily prayer and scripture reading. The Green's are deeply religious people.

Ms. Johnson, the social worker, speaks to the Greens and explains she would like to place Mary in their home. However, the Green's will have to agree to suspend their requirements concerning church attendance and prayer. The Green's are angry and feel this is unfair.

Ms. Johnson has nowhere else to place Mary and feels she must ask the Greens to modify their requirements in order to make the placement work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) How do you feel about this situation?

2) If you were the Greens, what would you do?

3) If you were Ms. Johnson what would you do?

FOSTERING FAMILIES

CASE SITUATIONS

THE PORTERS: POTENTIAL FOSTER PARENTS

The state social services agency has a policy that licensed foster parents shall not and will not spank or hit a foster child, even for purposes of discipline or punishment for bad behavior.

The position taken by agencies is that physical punishment is an ineffective means of discipline and especially inappropriate for a foster child who has typically been physically abused by his/her own parents.

Mr. and Mrs. Porter want to become licensed foster parents but are of the firm belief that the use of physical punishment and physical discipline (i.e., spanking) is often necessary and even required if the child is to learn right from wrong and develop a proper respect for parent figures. As support for their position, the Porter's say the Bible teaches that if you "spare the rod you will spoil the child."

If the Porters become foster parents it is likely that either they will spank the foster child or, if they don't, they will be going against their own best judgement.

In a small group, decide whether the Porters should be licensed as foster parents.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

At this point we ask that you sit quietly for about five minutes and reflect on the exercises we have completed.

Identify what you have learned concerning how the religious beliefs and practices that are meaningful to you might affect the type of foster child and foster care situation that you can and cannot handle in your home.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

"SHOULD'S OR COULD'S?"

Exercise #3

Below are a number of "should " statements concerning behavior or actions by a foster parent. For each statement check whether you agree or disagree. If you mostly agree check "agree;" if you mostly disagree, check "disagree."

Agree	Disagree	A Foster Parent:
____	____	should refrain from any communication with foster child that might be interpreted as talk about religion
____	____	should share his/her religious beliefs with the foster child, even if the child does not ask
____	____	should try to convert the foster child to his/her beliefs
____	____	should try to convert the birth parent to his/her beliefs
____	____	should give foster child freedom in deciding whether or not to participate in religious activities
____	____	should require the child to participate in whatever religious practices are a part of the foster family's usual routine or traditions
____	____	should do what the birth parent wants or requests in regard to the foster child's participation in religious activities
____	____	should do what the foster care worker wants or requests in relation to the foster child's participation in religious activities
____	____	should ask about the foster child's and birth parent's religious background and expectations before accepting a foster care placement

FOSTERING FAMILIES

Exercise #3 (Cont'd)

Below are a number of behaviors or situations that have been of concern to some foster parents because the situation is for them a source of moral and religious conflict or dilemma. Read through the list and indicate whether you:

(l) could definitely accept this situation in your own home
(2) could maybe accept this situation in your own home
(3) could never accept this situation in your own home
(4) not sure whether you could accept this situation.

_____ **Birth parent of foster child insists that foster parents take child to a church not attended by foster parents**

_____ **Foster child ridicules foster parent's religious beliefs.**

_____ **Birth parent insists that foster parents refrain from discussing religion and spirituality with the child in foster care**

_____ **Foster child refuses to attend church**

_____ **Foster child lies and/or steals**

_____ **Foster child refuses to say prayer at meals**

_____ **Foster child participates in occult and devil worship**

_____ **Foster child is sexually active**

_____ **Foster child has active interest in spiritual beliefs that are uncommon or unconventional (e.g., astrology, numerology, new age spirituality)**

_____ **Foster child takes contraceptive pills**

_____ **Foster child is preoccupied with religious ideas**

_____ **Foster child has no religious beliefs, whatsoever**

_____ **Birth parent ridicules foster parent's religious beliefs**

FOSTERING FAMILIES

USING A CONTRACT WITH THE PLACEMENT AGENCY

Lecturette #3

Thus far we have been emphasizing the importance of developing self-awareness, understanding what types of foster children and situations you can and cannot accept into your home and communicating your concerns and expectations to agency personnel. These actions can go a long way toward preventing conflicts and misunderstandings. Unfortunately, not all problems can be prevented.

When the foster parent recognizes a problem or anticipates a conflict involving differing expectations between the agency, foster child, birth parent and themselves, the use of a behavioral contract can help to minimize conflict.

Basically, a behavioral contract is a written statement or agreement that outlines what each person or party in the situation will do to resolve or handle the situation that is causing a problem or conflict. The behavioral contract is negotiated and signed by everyone.

A letter to the child placement agency or the county department of social services can help in the placement process as well as clarifying positions that are important to the foster home family.

Individual or Group Activity:

In Exercise #4, training participants are asked to work on a letter that indicates what a foster home family could indicate to a placement agency. This is a good exercise to do either with one's spouse or individually.

Another important aspect of this exercise is to consider how the placement agency would understand this type of "contract."

FOSTERING FAMILIES

EXPRESSING YOUR REQUIREMENTS TO THE AGENCY

Exercise #4

Up to this point we have participated in exercises designed to identify and clarify your religious beliefs and practices and how these might affect the child placement process and the performance of the foster family. Now it is time to get some thoughts on paper and consider what decisions need to be made as a foster parent.

INSTRUCTIONS:

In couples, or individually, compose a letter to the Child Placement Agency or the Department of Social Services where you serve as a foster home placement. Use the sample guide to help move through the decisions that can be made for placement of a child in your home.

Though there will not be enough time to complete this exercise in the training session, this exercise serves as an opportunity to begin considering the important points to offer to the foster care coordinator or licensing person you work with. You may or may not decide to actually send this letter, that is your choice!

Most important, please remember that if you do complete this letter, it should be in your own words.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

A GUIDE FOR PREPARING A LETTER TO THE AGENCY

Dear (Appropriate Person, Dept. of Social Services):

As you know, I am interested in becoming a foster parent. I have just completed a foster parent training session on the topic of religion and foster care. The session emphasized the importance of foster parents understanding how their own religious beliefs might affect their role as a foster parent. It also emphasized the importance of clear communication by foster parents to agency personnel concerning what types of children and situations the foster parents could and could not accept into their home.

For this reason, I would like to mention those aspects of my religious beliefs and practices that might have a bearing on a decision concerning which children I am asked to consider as foster children.

I would describe my own religious beliefs as: _____
_____.

Regular and customary religious practices in my home include .
_____.

I (would/would not) expect the foster child to participate in these religious practices.

If the foster child would not want to participate in the religious practices and activities that are part of our family routine, I would
_____.

If the foster child wants to participate in religious services or activities that are different from those common to (my/our) family (I/we) would (request/require) that
_____.

Page 2

If the foster child's birth parent wanted me to take his/her child to a particular religious service or activity, (I/we)
_____.

There are certain types of religious beliefs, practices or spirituality that (I/we) would not allow in (my/our) home. These are
_____.

As far as the foster child's religious background is concerned, I (wouldn't care, would prefer, would require) that
_____.

At the time of placement, if the agency's caseworker has little or no information about the foster child's religious background or the birth parent's expectations (I/we)
_____.

If you have questions or do not understand the concern I have expressed, please feel free to call me at _____
so we can discuss it further.

Sincerely yours,

_____
Mr. and/or Ms. Foster Parents

FOSTERING FAMILIES

KEY POINTS

1. **To improve foster home recruitment and retention, foster care professionals must better assess and achieve greater clarity about the religious background, practices, and motivations that bring potential parents to foster care.**

2. **To improve the placement process,a nd ultimately the success of the foster care placement, foster parents and workers must understand the rights of the birth parent to select the religious beliefs and activities to which their child(ren) will be exposed.**

3. **A contract type letter can be developed by the foster family as a way of indicating what areas are most important in religious practices in the foster home and with foster children.**

4. **We have provided a training opportunity which allows workers and foster parents to think and talk about religion and foster care. Hopefully, this exchange fosters a better understanding about the interplay between the altruistic act of fostering children and the spiritual and religious behaviors of foster families.**

FOSTERING FAMILIES

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Coles, Robert. The Spiritual Life of Children, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Coles, Robert. The Moral Life of Children. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1986.

Felker, Evelyn. "What the Bible Says About Punishment" from the book Raising Other People's Kids, Grand Rapids, MI: Williams Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Loewenberg, Frank. Religion and Social Work Practice in Contemporary American Society. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT FOR PARTIAL CREDIT

INSTRUCTIONS

Review Exercise #4, particularly the "Guide for Preparing a Letter to the Agency." Use this letter as a sample, and create a letter that demonstrates your understanding of the use of this kind of contract, and, that shows how this letter can improve the child placement and monitoring process.

Mail your completed work to:

Dr. Mona Struhsaker Schatz
Fostering Families
Colorado State University
Ft. Collins, Co. 80523

FOSTERING FAMILIES

Colorado State University
Application for Partial Credit

Module No.: SW_ _ _ _._ _ _

Name: _____ Social Security #:_____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

_____
(city) (state) (zip)

Grading: Pass/Fail (unless otherwise requested)

The Social Work Department at Colorado State University will grant university credit for each six different modules of training completed. Applications for credit must be made at the Time of Each Module Training ONLY. All work carried out in the modules must meet general academic standards of Colorado State. Written materials must be submitted and receive satisfactory grading for credit to be awarded. These applications will be held until the applicant completes his/her sixth module training. At this point, s/he will be able to formally register through the Division of Continuing Education for 1 credit hour. One credit hour of these modules costs $90.

FOSTERING FAMILIES

RELIGION AND THE FOSTER HOME

EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

The following items are designed to assess your satisfaction with the training as well as the effectiveness of the training design and materials. Please use the following scale and circle your response.

1 - not well addressed in the training
2 - not as adequately addressed as necessary
3 - adequate; given sufficient attention
4 - well addressed in the training
5 - very well addressed in the training

		Not Well Addressed				Very Well Addressed
1.	To understand how the religious background brought to foster care by the foster child is a part of the child's identity and an important emotional connection to his/her birth family personal history and culture	1	2	3	4	5
2.	To understand that the child's legal parent or guardian (usually a birth parent) has a legal right to select the religious beliefs and activities to which his/her child will be exposed which includes the right to limit or restrict a minor child's exposure to certain beliefs and practices.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	To understand the social services department's expectations of foster parents concerning how they handle matters related to the foster child and the child's parent's religion and spirituality	1	2	3	4	5

FOSTERING FAMILIES

EVALUATION

		Not Well Addressed				Very Well Addressed
4.	To increase the foster parent's self awareness concerning what differences in religious beliefs and spirituality they can and cannot tolerate	1	2	3	4	5
5.	To understand the importance of clear and honest communication between the foster parent and the foster care worker concerning what forms of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices by the foster child and his parent will and will not be acceptable by the foster parents	1	2	3	4	5
6.	To identify ways in which the foster parent can work with the birth parent in relation to a foster child's religious beliefs .	1	2	3	4	5

B. The following items relate to program aspects of the training module. Please rate these items on the following scale. Any additional comments are welcome in the space provided after the question.

1 = Very Poor
2 = Poor
3 = Adequate
4 = Good
5 = Very Good

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Very Good
1. The length of the training (Was the material covered in the time allotted?)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Usefulness of training manual	1	2	3	4	5
3. Participant responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5
4. Your abiility to participate expressing your ideas, feelings, and concerns	1	2	3	4	5
5. Your interest in the training session	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your comprehension of the material presented	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS: Please be specific:_____

C. We are interested in your feedback about our trainer, co-trainer(s). With this feedback we can continue to improve our sessions.

1 = Totally inadequate and ineffective
2 = Generally inadequate and ineffective
3 = About half and half
4 = Usually adequate and effective
5 = Highly adequate and effective

	Totally Ineffective/ Inadequate		0		Highly Effective/ Adequate
1. Knowledge/mastery of the subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
2. Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
3. Ability to communicate	1	2	3	4	5
4. Style of presentation	1	2	3	4	5
5. Enthusiasm/interest in subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
6. Overall performance	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ability to facilitate	1	2	3	4	5

8. In general, what would you identify as the strengths of trainer(s)?

9. In general, what would you identify as the deficiencies of trainer(s)?

D. The training setting is obviously an important aspect of a sessions success. We are interested in your feedback regarding the location, room, etc., and again welcome any comments or suggestions.

	Very Poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Very Good
1. Setting appropriate for concentration, i.e., distraction, noise, temperature.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Setting conducive for participation	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS: Please be specific:

E. Overall Comment: What could have been done differently to make the training sessions more beneficial or helpful to you? (Please use back of page if necessary).

I.D. #_ _ _ _

FOSTER CARE DEMOGRAPHICS

E. DIRECTIONS: Please fill in all blanks with information where needed or circle the correct number where several choices are provided on the next two pages.

1. Last 4 #'s of Social Security # _ _ _ _

2. Circle correct role: 1. worker 2. foster parent 3. Other_____
(please specify)

3. Date _ _ - _ _ - _ _

4. County _____

5. Circle gender: 1. Male 2. Female

6. Circle racial background:
1. Hispanic
2. Black, not of Hispanic origin
3. Asian-American
4. American Indian
5. White, not of Hispanic origin
6. Other:_____

7. Age_____

8. Are you (please circle one): 1. Married 2. Separated 3. Single

9. Number of birth & adopted female children_____

10. Number of birth & adopted male children_____

11. Circle age group of birth & adopted children:

1. all under 5
2. all under 10
3. all under 15
4. all under 18
5. all over 18
6. some under 18 & others over 18
7. none

12. Highest level of formal education: (please circle one)

1. some high school
2. high school graduate
3. some college
4. college graduate
5. Master's degree or higher

13. Within the past year, have you participated in any other foster care training other than Colorado State's Fostering Families?
1. yes 2. no

Thank you for your help! Your feedback is important for our continuing improvement of the Fostering Families project.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE

F. DIRECTIONS: Finally! Complete only the section which refers to you as either a Foster Care Parent or Foster Care Worker.

FOSTER CARE PARENT SECTION

14. What type of agency are you employed or licensed through?

1. County Department of Social Services
2. Private Child Placing Agency (please specify)_____
3. Both County Department of Social Servoces and Private.
4. Indian/Tribal
5. Other (please specify) _____

15. Total # of children presently in home_____

16. Number of foster female children_____

17. Number of foster male children_____

18. Circle age group of foster children:

1. all under 5
2. all under 10
3. all under 15
4. all under 18
5. all over 18
6. some under 18 & some over 18
7. no children now
8. not yet foster parents
9. other_____

19. Is at least one parent in the home providing parenting and supervision?

1. Yes 2. No, Parent(s) have work responsibilities outside of the home.

20. Length of involvement as foster family: _____years

21. Number of foster children for which licensed_____

22. Total number of foster children since being a foster parent_____

23. Circle general age groups of foster children you have served:

1. 0 - 24 mos.
2. 1 - 6 years
3. 0 - 12 years
4. 0 - 18 years
5. 0 - 21 years
6. short term/emergency

FOSTER CARE WORKER SECTION

24. What type of agency are you employed or licensed through?

1. County Department of Social Services
2. Private Child Placing Agency (please specify) _____
3. Indian/Tribal
4. Other _____ (please specify)

25. Are you currently employed as a foster care worker? 1. Yes 2. No

26. Length of time in current agency _____years

27. Current title:

1. Caseworker I
2. Caseworker II
3. Caseworker III
4. Supervisor I
5. Supervisor II
6. Foster Case Trainer
7. Other (specify) _____

28. Length of time in current position _____years

29. Length of time in protective services/foster care unit _____years